



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

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The establishment of the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge on the Colorado River in California-Arizona by executive order of the President was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes.

The new wildlife refuge of approximately 51,000 acres was the second to be established this year on Federal Reclamation irrigation projects. It brought to 29 the total number of such refuges throughout the western United States.

Last month the President declared the establishment of the Havasu Lake National Wildlife Refuge on the reservoir created by Parker Dam on the Colorado River, 155 miles below the Lake Mead National Wildlife Refuge at Boulder Dam.

The three wildlife refuges--Imperial, Havasu Lake and Lake Mead--followed the enactment in 1928 by Congress of the Boulder Canyon Project Act. They represent one of the incidental conservation benefits derived from the construction of multibenefit Boulder Dam.

Irrigation projects in the arid West are about the only places where certain waterfowl and other wildlife can be found. More than 3,000,000 acres of waste raw desert land, where once a jack rabbit could barely squeeze out a living, are now Reclamation project land offering ideal habitat for ducks, geese, quail, partridge and pheasants.

John C. Page, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, commented favorably on the new wildlife refuge at Imperial Reservoir. "The President has been using to the fullest the advantages offered by Reclamation water conservation projects in the West in conserving wildlife and other natural resources. Operated cooperatively by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service, these 29 refuges are of double value to wild waterfowl because they are strung out along the migration ways and also because of the few natural bodies of water.

"The national wildlife refuges on Reclamation projects range in size from the 1,120-acre refuge at the Conconully Reservoir in Washington to the 649,000-acre refuge on Lake Mead at Boulder Dam in Arizona-Nevada. Imperial and Havasu Lake, the latest two refuges to be ordered by the President, are ideal. They are strategically situated on the main flyway south to the great waterfowl wintering area on the delta of the Colorado River in Mexico."

Other wildlife havens will be created by Reclamation projects now under construction. The Klamath project in Oregon-California will have a bird refuge of about 17,000 acres. The Tule Lake sump on the project was developed by the Biological Survey as a bird refuge but fluctuating water surfaces were unsatisfactory for propagation and the stagnant waters caused botulism among the waterfowl. A pumping system to be constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation will make the refuge function properly, and Lower Klamath Lake in California will be filled and the refuge extended considerably.

The principal waterfowl species expected to use the Imperial and Havasu Lake refuges are the pintail, mallard, cinnamon teal and other ducks, the Canada goose, the American and snowy egret, the western and spotted sandpiper, and the wood and glossy ibis.

The Gambel quail is already an important upland bird species of the Colorado River Valley and is expected to increase in importance. Desert mountain sheep

are also found in the mountain ranges adjacent to the Colorado River and the two latest refuges will add vital watering places for them. The greatest pressure from illegal shooting of mountain sheep in the West is encountered at watering places.

Fish life is also propagated on Reclamation projects. All the Reclamation reservoirs in accessible localities have been stocked with fish and many of them are among the most popular fishing resorts for many miles around.

A considerable number of western rivers are too muddy and silt-laden for good fish habitats. The Colorado River was an example before Boulder Dam was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation six years ago. Since the completion of Boulder Dam the Colorado runs cold and clear for 40 miles below. This section of the river and Lake Mead, Boulder Dam's clear blue reservoir, are now alive with fish. Fishermen have caught huge 12-pound bass in Lake Mead.

The conservation of fish and wildlife has been receiving major consideration in the construction of Federal Reclamation projects. A sweeping program for the conservation of migratory fish was initiated by the Bureau of Reclamation in connection with the Grand Coulee Dam project, in Washington, and the same kind of plan is under study on the Central Valley project, in California.

The significance of Reclamation construction in the conservation of wildlife in the West was emphasized by Commissioner Page. "The disappearance of some species of wildlife from their natural habitat, the great spring floods, and the severe dust storms of the Great Plains have directed the country's attention more and more to the conservation of American wildlife. I am glad that the Bureau of Reclamation can play its important part in this work. Our water storage reservoirs in the West are invaluable wildlife sanctuaries, even though secondary in importance, of course, to their primary function of providing water for the irrigation of land and the development of western communities."

A list of national wildlife refuges on Federal Reclamation projects follows:

WILDLIFE REFUGES ESTABLISHED ON FEDERAL RECLAMATION PROJECTS

State	Reclamation Project	Wildlife Refuge	Date of Executive Order
Arizona	Salt River	Salt River	1909
California	All-American Canal	Salton Sea	1930
Do	Klamath	Clear Lake	1911
Do	Do	Tule Lake	1928
California-Arizona	Boulder Canyon	Havasu Lake	1941
Do	Do	Imperial Reservoir	1941
California-Oregon		Lower Klamath Lake	1908
Idaho	Boise	Deer Flat	1909
Do	Minidoka	Lake Walcott	1909
Montana	Sun River	Pishkun	1912
Do	Do	Willow Creek	1909
Do	Do	Benton Lake	1929
Do	Milk River	Lake Bowdoin	1936
Nebraska	North Platte	Lake Minatare	1916
Do	Do	Lake Alice	1916
Nevada	Newlands	Fallon	1931
Do	Boulder Canyon	Lake Mead	1933
New Mexico	Carlsbad	Lake McMillan	1909
Do	Do	Avalon Reservoir	1909
Do	Rio Grande	Rio Grande	1909
Oregon	Umatilla	Cold Springs	1909
Do	Do	McKay Creek	1927
Do	Do	Lake Malheur	1908
Do	Klamath	Upper Klamath Lake	1928
South Dakota	Belle Fourche	Belle Fourche	1909
Utah	Strawberry Valley	Strawberry Valley	1926
Washington	Okanogan	Conconully	1909
Do	Yakima	Lake Cle Elum	1909
Wyoming	North Platte	Pathfinder	1928